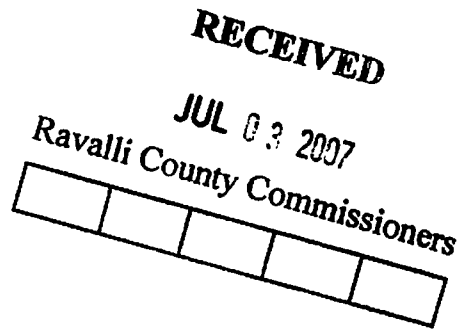


SARAH AND JC HOWELL
825 LOST HORSE ROAD
HAMILTON, MONTANA 59840
(406) 363-4075

June 28, 2007

Mr. Chuck Oliver, District Ranger
Darby Ranger District
P.O. Box 388
Darby, MT 59828



Re: Proposed Use of Lost Horse Quarry

Dear Mr. Oliver:

My wife and I are writing to express our opposition to restarting mining operations at the quarry located near Lost Horse Road approximately 4.5 miles from Highway 93. At less than a mile from the site, our home is the nearest residence to the quarry, and these operations will impact us more than anyone else. There are three major reasons why we are opposed this plan: noise, condition of Lost Horse Road, and safety.

Since we are located so close to the quarry, the sounds of trucks, mining equipment and a rock crusher will be a constant irritant to us. We chose this particular home site because of its solitude and natural beauty. After a snow coats the ground and trees with a muffling blanket and the creek is partially frozen, the quiet that descends on Lost Horse Canyon is the most peaceful and relaxing lack of sound imaginable. When the occasional gunshot is fired, it echoes for miles. The sound of a car door slamming can carry for hundreds of yards. Mining operations will sound like a busy street corner in New York City.

Secondly, Lost Horse Road is one of the worst maintained roads in the county. For much of the year it is filled with so many potholes that traveling to Highway 93 requires the use of protective mouth gear or you run the risk of chipping a tooth. The rest of the year it is covered in a thick layer of ice. The number and frequency of trucks driving up and down the road will make the road virtually impassable. In order to keep the road maintained to an acceptable level, much of the material that will be mined will need to be used on Lost Horse Road.

Mr. Chuck Oliver


July 1, 2007

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Finally and most importantly, we are concerned for our safety. A truck with a full load of crushed rock does not brake or maneuver well under the best of conditions. Lost Horse Road is not paved for much of the way to the quarry, and it is narrow and winding. For most of the time the mine will be working, it is covered in ice. In many places the road is too narrow for a car and a truck to pass side by side, and some of these places are located next to turns with limited views. It seems inevitable that a collision will occur, and the likely outcome could be devastating.

For these reasons, we are very opposed to reopening mining at this location. This will greatly reduce the quality of life for which we moved here and will endanger our lives and the lives of our neighbors. The cost of road materials does not compare to the cost of a human life. Do the right thing and do not allow mining at this location.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JC Howell', with a stylized, cursive script.

JC Howell

cc: Ravalli County Commissioners
Ravalli Republic